/127 cont./

776 with the ability or knowledge within the domain of the profane
[771] appears, then they consider it to be the working of kuei /128/
This gives rise to fear or hope, prayers or opposition. There is
* [782] only one method and that is to invoke the assistance of kuei
with supernatural powers and offer sacrifices to them.

Although the Miao do not differentiate between shen and kuei, they do believe that there is a difference between good and bad kuei. The good kuei live in the yin/supernatural/world
772 of heaven [ta] piaV. The earth, on which people live, is the
776 yang /mundane/ world. They do not have the theory of hell, but they believe that under the earth there lives a different kind of human beings. These people are as big as the little finger and live in houses plaited of mugwort and grass. A
774 human being has soul [pienV] and a body [koY-ɬ'ieŋY/. When
[828] one dreams it is an excursion of the soul while the body is
[753] asleep. When a person is sick and cannot be cured by medicine, then it is said that his soul has been taken away by a kuei. When a person becomes unconscious, his body has been seized by a ku woman. When a man dies, his soul ascends to heaven,
775 and he comes to the realization of death only when he hears the
[761] crash of thunder or when a Miao sorcerer comes to search for him. Those who suffer a sudden or violent death, such as from
[776] knife or spear wound, or from difficult childbirth, rolling into a gully, or falling into a pit, after death many become evil kuei. They are unable to go up to heaven; they are either immediately reborn into another state of existence and come back to life, or remain in the world to make trouble for people.
776 If a streak of black vapor is seen at night, they consider it the
821 manifestation of a kuei and people cry out, "[peY ts'əɬ]"
[789] (meaning "drive away"), to expel them. The Miao for the most part believe that all natural phenomena have kuei as their controlling power. Hence the wind has a wind kuei [kueŋY
[824] ɬoV] and trees, tree kuei [kueŋY nduV]. When there is a
* [782] violent storm with wind, thunder, and rain, they must burn
[237] beeswax in order to honor the kuei. What has been stated above are the native beliefs of the Miao. In recent years,

[8 cont.]

755 to perform the ritual. Collusion between the two is common, and the ignorant people are made victims. These ghost affairs, however, often have a psychological effect and little ailments are sometimes healed this way. But in nine out of ten serious cases death is the only outcome. Their superstition is so deep-
[753] rooted that they think all diseases are caused by spirits who have to be appeased. Death is considered a destiny, and the living resign
●[761] themselves to fate. Every year when diseases are prevalent in all hsien areas in Kweichow, the diviners and the priests do a thriving trade that unfortunately causes innumerable deaths. What a pity!

6) Vices. Kweichow is an opium producing province. The
276 opium growers are the Miao-I, but they themselves detest this drug, and those among them who smoke opium are extremely rare. Even cigarette-smokers are few. But there is a kind of tobacco, locally produced, which is favored by all. When they are not at work, whether sitting down leisurely or walking in the street, they would smoke unceasingly the pipe tobacco. They
273 are fond of wine; men and women, old and young, derive pleasure from liquor and encourage each other to drink more, their breath reeking of alcohol. There are two kinds of spirits; a strong wine made from corn and mixed grains, and a white wine distilled from glutinous rice. The quality of both is mediocre and the taste ordinary, but they relish them with delight.

7) Recreation. The Miao-I in Kweichow are mostly farmers
517 who live apart in wild mountains and lone valleys under difficult and strenuous circumstances. They work so hard [9] that if they do not seek some kind of amusement, life would be entirely devoid of pleasure. So all groups of Miao-I emphasize recreations, which take place in between farming periods, such as the liu-sheng [six-pipe bamboo wind instrument] dance, the flower dance, market dance, moon dance, chasing the moon, sitting in the moon, singing, yao-ma-lang [or kan-piao, love-making], bull fight and horse racing. Among these the liu sheng dance,
[527] flower dance, market dance, bull fight and horse racing are held periodically in a fixed location according to precedents. The

[28 cont.]
756 appease him a whole cow has to be sacrificed.

5) To rectify an injustice. If A has received injustice in
754 the hands of B and is so oppressed that he has no means of appeal,
627 he may ask a priest to present a petition in the nether world. The priest can invoke a kind of "calamity ghost" to visit B, and if the latter is still ruthless and stubborn, this ghost can bring about death to all the members of his family, including the animals. To enlist the help of the "calamity ghost," it is necessary to give him a big crab, several river worms, a cock, and a male dog. The dog may be killed, but the cock may not be killed -- it can only be cursed to death by the priest. The crab and the river worms are put in a jar to be buried far away, [29] even in the bottom of a river, to prevent others from digging it up. It is said that in two or three days calamity is sure to befall B's family. If the latter knows about this, a priest should immediately be engaged to divine from the magic diagrams. Only when the buried items are unearthed can the calamity be averted.

761 6) To prolong life. A priest can tell whether a person's
782 life will be short-lived and he can apply for an extension for
756 him. In the process the priest has to slaughter a male pig and proceed before Yen-wang to beg for more life for the applicant. When this is granted, another pig is slaughtered to be sacrificed together with wine, glutinous rice and a carp as an expression of gratitude to Yen-wang.

787 7) To tell fortune. When someone does not know how to
756 act in times of crisis, a priest is asked to make a decision. Important matters such as choosing a trade or a profession, and trifles such as selecting materials for a garment, all require the decision of the priest, who will attempt to put the inquirer's mind in place. The average person respects the words of the priest. Sometimes when the priest decides that it will be very unlucky for a certain person to leave the village, that person may spend the rest of his life at home without going outside the village gate.

756 8) To protect children. Many families whose children
751 are susceptible to frequent illness would ask the priest to be their

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/158 cont./

A M 771 The missionary Telford (1) calls the Akha "perhaps the

1. Page 98.

most superstitious people in the state of Kengtung." According to our experience, the Akha, like all lower agriculturalists, have strong religious ties, but not nearly to the extent that the Meau have, in spite of the fact that the religion of the Akha, like that of the Meau, is definitely ancestor and spirit worship.

a) Ideas about Death and the Soul

M 761 776 The Meau regard sickness as well as the activity of evil spirits as causes of death. In their view, it may happen that in clearing land for a new rice field a tree in which a spirit dwells may be felled. Now the latter is angry at the human being who robbed him of his dwelling and kills him. Even if one should visit a spot in the forest which happens to shelter a spirit the latter regards this as a disturbance and seeks revenge on the intruder. It is therefore not surprising that a female shaman whose three sons had been the victims of an epidemic became convinced that she had built her house on a spot inhabited by an evil spirit who had taken revenge for it.

M 774 The Meau believe in an immortal soul, plī, which can have many shapes and leaves a sleeping human being in order to /159/ wander about invisibly. This causes dreams, for the M [753 776 761 755] experiences of the wandering soul become known to the sleeper in the dream. It generally returns to the body when the person awakens, but it may also happen that evil spirits hold the soul in captivity and prevent it from returning to the body. Then illness occurs, and if incantations are of no avail, death follows.

M 774 775 614 Every person has a soul. If a person dies, his soul is reborn in the next child of the family or the sib. Souls have no sex, for it does not matter what sex the next child of the sib is; even distinguished men may thus be reborn in the body of a girl. Accordingly, there is no judgement of good and evil human beings in the other world; the soul has nothing to expect other than that it will be reborn as soon as a new child of the

/160 cont./

775 sib died out, the informants repeatedly gave me the answer: "That does not happen." When I pointed to other peoples, it was said: "Well, we do not know what souls would do in such a case." They could not tell me any more about what happened to the souls of the insane or cretins, and similarly there was [828] no explanation for fainting.

769 When the Meau change their residence site, the souls of the dead leave the old house along with the migrants, after they 114 have been informed of the change of location through a special [775] ceremony. They then migrate with them and take up residence in the new dwelling of the family. Contrary to my findings, Lajonquière (1) reports that the souls stay in the old houses in

II, p. 319.

case of a change of residence: "A Meau who was asked by a missionary whether he worships his ancestors answered: 'Yes, they are there, and we do not take them with us!'" It seems to me that this is undoubtedly an error, for otherwise the confirmed ancestor worship and the cult associated with it among the Meau could not be explained. I do not think that there is a misconception on my part because my data are largely confirmed by various observations of other authors, and moreover a cult of the kind practiced by the Meau without the presence of ancestors could only be regarded as absurd.

753 If a soul does not find its way back to the body, it is 774 commonly assumed, as was said, that evil spirits prevent it from doing so, but it may also happen that it simply loses its way. That is, it is inquisitive and goes into the region of the clouds or into distant primeval forests among strange peoples and in doing so travels dangerous and devious paths. The owner of such a wandering soul /161/ grows weak and wastes [761] away; if one does not succeed in calling the soul back, the person dies.

775 The dead and their souls are not feared. The dead 761 body remains in the grave and decomposes; it can never return. If it should actually come back to life, this could only mean that there was a mistake and that the person had

/161 cont./

775 [761] not died. This information strongly suggests a knowledge of apparent death. While the corpse is rotting in the grave, the soul keeps the shape of the deceased. Nevertheless the souls are not feared, not even those of powerful chiefs or shamans, as long as they belong to the sib. Since they know no abode other than that of ordinary men and women, there is no realm of souls.

775 787 Only in dreams does a dead person appear to a living one. Such appearances are impossible in the waking state and are not limited to seasons or times of day. The appearance of a dead person means only that the soul is hungry and in need of sacrifices, which are then quickly offered.

614 775 776 825 In general, the souls of the dead of alien sibs are not feared either. There is one exception, however. During the three days after interment when every soul remains unprotected, so to speak, in the neighborhood of the grave, it may happen that it is dragged into the jungle by evil spirits and is transformed there into a man-eating tiger. If such a tiger is shot, evil spirits take the soul with them. In time it turns into an evil spirit which causes harm. Such evil spirits are dangerous for people who do not belong to the sib, and only for them. If the track of a tiger shows five toes instead of the customary four, it is a magic soul-tiger.

775 825 [648] Tales of this sort have also reached the valley-dwelling neighbors of the Meau, who now have considerable fear of the Meau. Lajonquière (1), for instance, writes: "that the Thai say

1. II, p. 312.

of the Meau that they do not have to be afraid of tigers because they belong to the same family and can transform themselves into tigers in the evening." The Meau north of Nan have the notion that a tiger /162/ jumps against a house in which a person is in his death struggle. The tiger takes the soul, which is transformed into a tiger. This idea is undoubtedly foreign, probably of Laotian origin.

[763] [177]

AKha A04
Mi'ao AE5

/230 cont./

A 515 Conditions among the Akha are somewhat more favorable, but likewise leave much to be desired. The personal cleanliness of the Akha, however, is unconditionally greater than that of the Meau. The people wash themselves regularly as soon as they A [356] are grown up; children are washed daily. The houses are always [296] swept clean, and the Akha seem to wash their clothing /231/ [364] more often than the Meau do. Otherwise what was found among the Meau applies. To be sure, hygienic conditions are somewhat 165 better, but they are still so deficient that a high mortality among [163] the children as a result of epidemics and sicknesses is unavoidable. Among the Akha, too, however, this mortality rate is offset by great fertility, so that the Akha, too, will certainly not be subject to a population decline.

A M 164 165 Prophylactic measures against illness are completely unknown to both the Meau and Akha, as is the nature of infectious diseases. Although I did not succeed in determining precisely the losses caused by epidemics, the consequences of such pestilences were [751] easily ascertained. Merely the presence of sibless Meau, who [753] had placed themselves as unfree under the protection of powerful large /extended/ families, showed this, as did the many widows, widowers, childless parents, and orphans. Whenever I inquired M about the causes of death, it was said: "Died because of the 761 vengeance of evil spirits." It often turned out, however, that 164 these evil spirits had killed dozens of people at the same time. 731 I learned that once the Meau built a village in a country at an altitude lower than is customary and infested with malaria. When subsequently a malaria epidemic broke out they believed that they had chosen as a dwelling site a place haunted by evil spirits and they moved their village.

A 164 731 I could not find any moving of a village because of the outbreak of an epidemic among the Akha. Southwest of the Doy Tung there was an Akha village whose inhabitants had almost all fallen victim to an epidemic; from the description it was probably cholera. The survivors, however, had not moved the village.